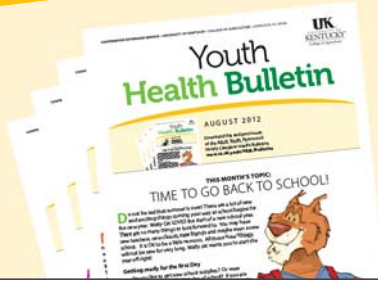


# Youth Health Bulletin



SEPTEMBER 2014

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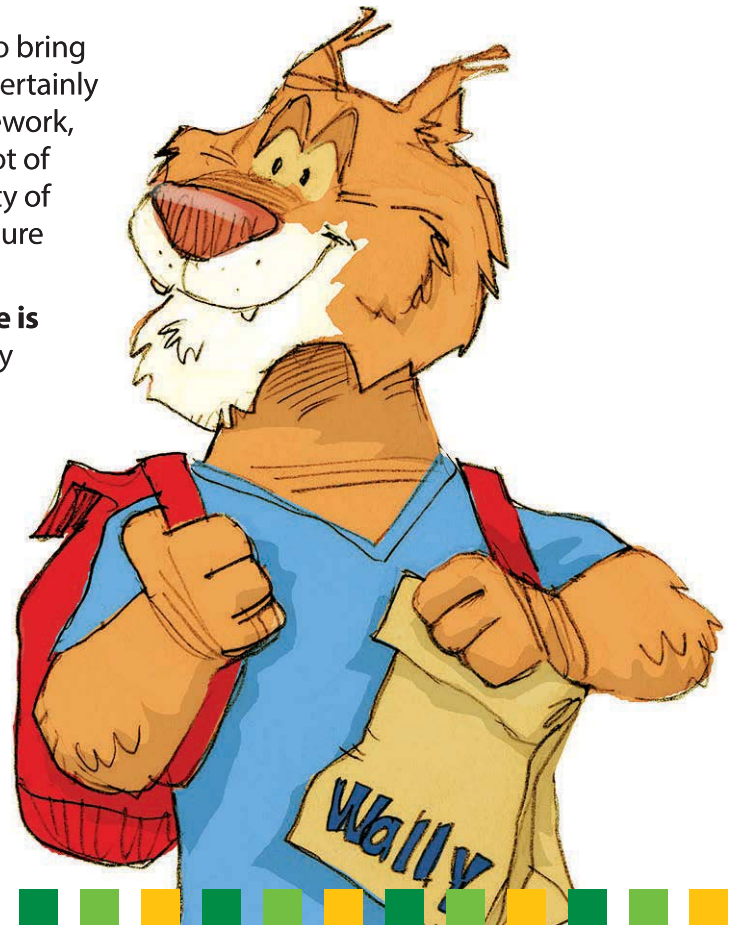
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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: WEARING A BACKPACK

**D**o you have a lot of homework? Maybe you have to bring home several textbooks every night — Wally Cat certainly does! Although Wally Cat is happy to work on his homework, sometimes his backpack gets awfully heavy! He has a lot of things in his backpack: books, folders, papers and plenty of school supplies. Wally Cat follows several tips to make sure that he is careful not to hurt his back or neck.

- **The first thing Wally does is to make sure that he is wearing the backpack the right way** — especially if he has any textbooks in it. First, he always wears both straps. Wearing both straps makes sure that all the weight of the bag is evenly spread over your two shoulders. Next, Wally Cat always makes sure that he is standing up straight. When you are leaning over to one side, you may be putting lots of weight on that side of your body, which can hurt your back.

Continued on the back →



## When not worn properly, a backpack can cause back and neck aches and pains.



Wally Cat wears his backpack almost every day in order to get all of his things back and forth from school. But he makes sure that he wears it the right way and is careful that it does not get in the way of others. Next time you are wearing your backpack, make sure you take care of your back and neck and watch out for others.

### SOURCES:

- American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)(2014). National School backpack Awareness Day. <http://www.aota.org/en/Conference-Events/Backpack-Safety-Awareness-Day.aspx>
- AOTA (n.d.) Backpack Strategies for Parents and Students <http://www.aota.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/Backpack/Backpack%20Strategies%20for%20Parents%20%20Students.pdf>
- Nemours Kidshealth. (2013). Backpacks. <http://kidshealth.org/kid/homework/health/backpack.html>

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- **When packing your backpack, you should put the heaviest items in the back part of the bag, closest to your back.** Also, make sure that items will not be moving around when you start walking. Sometimes, Wally Cat has too many books and binders to fit in his bag, or it seems like it may be too heavy to carry on his back. When that happens, he usually tries to carry one or two books in his paws.
- **Wally Cat also tries to remember how important it is to be aware of who and what is around when the backpack is very full.** Sometimes a backpack can get in the way of other people or even yourself. Wally always makes sure that his backpack does not block a walkway between desks or is placed where someone may trip over it. He also tries to be mindful of where it is on the bus. He does not want it to be in someone else's way.
- **Wally Cat always looks around before he takes off a full backpack.** He watches to make sure that he does not put it down on someone else's toes or in a place that it does not need to be. He knows exactly where it needs to go every day when he gets home.

Help Wally Cat find his backpack!



Youth  
Health Bulletin

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